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GEOG 1290 A03: Introduction to Physical Geography Syllabus

Winter 2026

Traditional Territories Acknowledgement

The University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anisininewuk, Dakota Oyate and Dene, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of Reconciliation and collaboration.

[University of Manitoba's Traditional Territories Acknowledgement](#)

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COURSE DETAILS

Course Title & Number:	Introduction to Physical Geography - GEOG 1290 A03
Class Day & Time:	T/TR, 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM, 221 Wallace
Number of Credit Hours:	3 Credit Hours
Pre-Requisites:	None

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor	Lisa Ford (Pronouns: she/her/hers), preferred form of address: Lisa
Email	Lisa.Ford@umanitoba.ca - Include course code & section (GEOG 1290 A03) in email subject line. - Allow at least 48-hours for response (weekdays only).
Appointments	Office Hours: Mon. & Wed., 9:45 – 10:45 AM Email instructor to book appointment. If you would like to contact me, please email me. Phone calls will not be returned.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

U of M Course Calendar Description

The *Undergraduate Calendar* of The University of Manitoba describes GEOG 1290 Introduction to Physical Geography as follows:

(Formerly 053.129) This course studies aspects of our physical environment: climate, landforms, soils and vegetation. Not to be held with GEOG 1291 or GEOG 1200 or GEOG 1201.

Course Attributes: Science requirement for BA, University 1 Course, Ukrn Cdn Herit Studies

There are no prerequisites for this 3-credit-hour course. Its 3-credit-hour companion course is GEOG 1280, Introduction to Human Geography, and most students taking first-year geography, whether through distance and online education or on-campus, take both GEOG 1280 and GEOG 1290.

General Course Description

Physical geographers study the spatial and temporal variations of Earth's living and non-living physical systems. This course uses a systems approach to study the interactions of Earth's Spheres, including the atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, and the biosphere. The interrelationships and human interactions within and between these Spheres are examined through a geographic lens. Geographic tools will be used to study: Earth-Sun geometry, the layered atmosphere, global energy systems, atmospheric circulation and moisture, cyclonic weather systems, the Earth's interior and crust, tectonic processes and landforms, weathering and mass wasting, soils, groundwater and karst, fluvial systems, and glacial systems.

COURSE GOALS

1. **Foster Curiosity and Critical Thinking through a Geographic Lens**
Encourage curiosity about the natural world and develop students' ability to think critically about spatial patterns and processes using the geographic framework: *What is where? Why there? Why care?*
2. **Understand Earth Systems and Processes**
Apply a systems-based approach to explore key natural and human-influenced processes that operate within and between the Earth's spheres—atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, and biosphere—and how they vary across space and time.
3. **Build Foundational Research and Academic Communication Skills**
Develop core information literacy and academic writing skills by locating and evaluating credible sources, paraphrasing and summarizing effectively, and using appropriate citation practices (modified APA format) to communicate findings in a scholarly tone.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives and accompanying key terms, concepts, and topics are available on UM Learn in the Learning Objectives (LO) Table.

COURSE TEXTBOOK

Hess, D., Finch, R., & Tasa, D. G. (2022). *McKnight's Physical Geography: A Landscape Appreciation*, (13thed.). Pearson.

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The University of Manitoba (U of M) communicates with students only through official U of M email accounts ([U of M Student Email Policy](#)). Email is the primary means of communication between the instructor, the university, and students. You are expected to check your U of M email regularly and ensure your account is active and functioning. Failure to do so may result in serious consequences depending on the nature of the communication.

- All emails must be **sent from your U of M email account**; messages from other accounts will not receive a reply.
- Allow up to **48 hours for a response** (weekdays only; weekends and holidays excluded).
- All communications must be professional, respectful, and courteous and must include:
 - o The subject heading: **GEOG 1290**
 - o A proper salutation (e.g., Dear, Hello, Good Morning)
 - o Your **full name**

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL (VW) DEADLINE

The last day to withdraw without a refund is March 19, 2026. Students who do not drop this course by the VW deadline will be assigned a final grade. See the [Registrar's Office](#) web page for more information.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Quizzes and tests				
Quiz #	Value	Due Date	Material Covered	Additional details
Syllabus Quiz	0	NA	Syllabus	≥80% to access “Weekly Course Content” folder
Test # I	25%	Thurs., Feb. 12	Sections A-F (subject to change)	~50 questions (50 minutes) (in-person, closed book)
Test # II	25%	Tues., Mar. 17	Primarily Sections G-I - subject to change - 10-15% may of questions may come from Sections A-F	~50 questions (50 minutes) (in-person closed book)
Final Exam				
Final Exam	Value	Due Date	Additional Details	
	50%	TBD	- <u>Cumulative</u> final exam (~120 questions in 2 hours) - To be scheduled by the Registrar’s Office during the Final Exam Period (April 11-25, 2026) - Final Exams – Registrar’s Office	
- Each test/quiz/final exam may be written once, and the result is final. - Assignments will only be graded once, and the result is final.				

Grade Distribution

A+: ≥ 90% (Exceptional)	B+: 75 - 79% (V. Good)	C+: 65 - 69% (Satisfactory)	D: 50 - 59% (Marginal)
A: 80 - 89% (Excellent)	B: 70 - 74% (Good)	C: 60 - 64% (Adequate)	F: ≤ 49% (Failure)

Notes:

- All final grades are subject to departmental review and approval.
- Grades will be rounded to one decimal place using standard rounding conventions, and cut-offs will be strictly enforced.
 - Example: 69.94 → 69.9 (C+)
 - Example: 69.95 → 70.0 (B)
- The course is not graded on a curve.
- Additional or extra assignments to improve a grade will not be accepted.
- Grades will only be changed in cases of a valid error (e.g., calculation mistake).

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and/or based on the learning needs of the students but such changes are subject to [Section 2.8 of ROASS](#).

See Course Schedule on UM Learn.

COURSE FORMAT

Lectures

- Lectures will normally be delivered on-campus, and students are expected to attend and take notes.

- In the event of instructor illness, lectures may be delivered remotely or provided as pre-recorded PowerPoint lectures. The instructor will make every effort to avoid disruptions, but modifications may be necessary.

Lecture Materials on UM Learn:

- PowerPoint slides will be posted in PDF format (1 slide per page, with option to print multiple per page).
- Text notes will be provided in Rich Text Format (.rtf), which can be opened in Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or other word processors.

Important: PPT slides and text notes are not a substitute for attending class. Not all lecture material will appear on the slides. Students must add their own notes from lecture and assigned readings/viewings.

Weekly Time Commitment

Students typically attend 150 minutes (2½ hours) of lectures per week. It is recommended to study 2–3 hours per lecture hour (sometimes more). This means you may need at least 5 additional hours per week—beyond lectures, readings, and videos—to keep up with the material.

The time needed will vary depending on:

- Your prior knowledge and background in the subject
- The complexity of the week's content
- Your personal learning style and speed

Some weeks will be lighter, while others will require more study time.

Learning Strategy

Set aside regular, dedicated study times for this course and stick to your schedule. If you are unsure how to approach the readings, the [SQRRR](#) strategy can be especially effective:

1. **Survey** – Skim the chapter for an overview. Focus on introductions, conclusions, headings, and subheadings.
2. **Question** – Go through the chapter again, thinking critically about what you are reading. Write down questions or annotate the text.
3. **Read** – Read in detail now that you have the context.
4. **Recite** – Summarize key ideas aloud or in writing.
5. **Review** – Re-read important sections to confirm you understand both main ideas and key facts.

The key is to find a study method that works for you and apply it consistently throughout the course.

Weekly Study Routine

- Attend lectures and read assigned textbook readings.
- Make detailed notes on important concepts using the Learning Objectives (LO) Table as a guide.
- Apply the SQRRR strategy whenever possible to improve comprehension and retention.
- Study and learn key definitions (especially for multiple-choice questions).
- Watch any assigned videos.
- Complete the chapter's UM Learn practice quiz questions (recommended).

Your notes should be comprehensive, drawing from the LO Table and lecture material, textbook readings, and online videos. Consistent use of these strategies will help you keep up with the course material, prepare for assessments, and perform confidently on exams.

University of Manitoba Health and Safety

The University of Manitoba is committed to providing a safe learning environment for students, faculty, and staff.

- If campus operations change due to health concerns (e.g., COVID-19 or other emergencies), this course may temporarily shift to a remote delivery format.
- If the instructor is required to stay home for an extended period and no substitute is available, the course may also move online temporarily.
- **Stay home if you are ill.** If you are feeling unwell, you are strongly encouraged to remain at home and focus on recovery.

ASSESSMENTS & EVALUATION

Midterm Tests – 2 x 25% = 50% of Final Grade

- **Closed book**, in-person, in-class.
- ~50 questions in 50 minutes
- Multiple-choice, true/false, and multiple-select format.

Final Exam – 50% of Final Grade

- **Closed-book**, cumulative (all course content), written in-person.
- ~120 questions in 2 hours.
- Scheduled by the Registrar's Office and must be written during the assigned time.

Questions for all assessments may be based on lectures, textbook readings, assigned readings/videos, and other learning activities.

Assessments: Quiz/Test/Midterm/Exam Policy

- Each assessment may be written only once, regardless of the outcome.
- Rewrites are not permitted under any circumstances.
- Makeup assessments will not be offered, and missed assessments will not be re-weighted to the final exam.
- Once an assessment has been completed, the result is **final**. Rewriting or re-weighting grades will not be considered due to dissatisfaction with the result.

Midterm Test Review Policy

- Grades for midterms will be posted on UM Learn approximately 24–48 hours after the exam.
- Multiple-choice and true/false questions will not be posted on UM Learn. Time permitting, some questions may be reviewed in lecture, focusing on items where 40% or less of the class answered correctly.
- Students may review their midterm by emailing to make an appointment between seven (7) to fourteen (14) days after the midterm.
- No other review opportunities will be provided.
- Students are NOT permitted to take pictures of midterm questions.

Group Chat (What's App, Telegram, etc) Closure Policy

To protect academic integrity and ensure fairness for all students:

- All group chats (e.g., WhatsApp, Discord, Messenger, etc.) must be **closed** starting **30 minutes before** the midterm test/final exam start time and remain closed for **at least 3 hours after** the test/exam ends.
- Example: For a midterm at 11:30 AM, group chats must close at 11 AM CST and not re-open until at least 3:45 PM CST.
- Chats must remain closed for the full 3 hours after the end of the quiz/exam to accommodate students writing at later times due to extenuating circumstances or technical issues.
- Once chats re-open, specific questions may not be discussed at any time, as some students may write deferred assessments later.
- Violating this policy may be considered academic misconduct under the University's Academic Integrity rules.

Academic Integrity for Quizzes, Tests, and Exams

All quizzes, tests, and exams are **closed-book**:

- Unauthorized materials are prohibited, including notes, textbooks, dictionaries, translators, mobile devices, smart watches, laptops, or any device capable of storing/transmitting information.
- No other individuals may be present during the assessment. Collaboration of any kind is prohibited.
- Photographing, copying, or recording questions is not allowed.
- Refer to the University's [Academic Integrity](#) policy for full details.

MISSED TEST & DEFERRED FINAL EXAMINATIONS

1. Missed Test Policy

If you are unable to complete a midterm test due to a medical or compassionate circumstance, you may qualify for an assignment extension or a makeup quiz/test.

- First request: A University of Manitoba [Self-Declaration Form for Brief or Temporary Absence](#) available on the [Self-Declaration Policy for Students](#) webpage is accepted without medical documentation.
- Second and subsequent requests: Professional documentation (e.g., a medical note) is required.

Self-Declaration Process

Read the *Academic Fraud* section on the University's [Academic Integrity Page](#). Making false claims for extensions or deferrals is considered academic misconduct.

To qualify for a makeup quiz/midterm test or assignment extension, you must:

1. Email the instructor promptly from your University of Manitoba account:
 - At least 24 hours before the due date, or
 - No later than 48 hours* after the missed quiz/test/assignment date if unexpected circumstances occur.
2. Include your full name, student number, course number, the assessment name/number, and the due date.
3. Attach the completed Self-Declaration Form for [Brief and Temporary Student Absences](#).**
4. Understand that only one self-declaration is accepted per student, per term, per course; subsequent absences require documentation.

*Our provincial Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) does not require you to provide details of your medical or compassionate circumstance.

Important:

- **Failure to contact your instructor within 48 hours of the missed midterm test will result in a grade of zero, unless extreme circumstances made you physically incapable of email communication.**
- **One (1) self-declaration is accepted, per student, per term, per course**
- Make-up tests/midterms must be written within 7 calendar days of the original date. If this is not possible due to documented extenuating circumstances, the grade may be re-weighted to the final exam.
- The self-declaration covers up to 5 days of absence. If you miss more than 6 days, documentation is required.
- Acceptable reasons for missing an assessment do **not** include: work, vacations, long weekends, other coursework, or multiple tests on the same day. If unsure, email your instructor in advance.
- **Completed midterms cannot be re-written or re-weighted for any reason.**

2. Deferred Final Examinations

If you cannot take the final exam for known reasons (e.g., official athletic/academic events, religious obligations, medical condition):

- Submit a Request for Deferred Examination to your faculty advising office at least 20 working days before the scheduled exam.
- See [Academic Advising](#)

If you cannot take the final exam due to unexpected illness or compassionate reasons:

- Submit a Deferred Exam Application to your faculty and self-declare the reason for deferral.
- This application must normally be filed **within 48 hours** of the missed exam (or last missed exam if multiple).
- Late applications may be accepted if ongoing incapacity or exceptional circumstances can be documented.

Scheduling & Notification:

- Deferred exams are scheduled by the Department of Environment and Geography once paperwork is received from your faculty. You will be notified via UM email.
- Deferred exams normally occur within 30 working days after the end of the original exam period. Writing “at your convenience” is not an option.
- For more information see [Final Exam Conflicts and Deferrals](#)

Deferred examinations will normally take place within 30 working days from the end of the examination series from which the examination was deferred. Writing a deferred examination at your convenience may not be an option. For more information see [Final Exam Conflicts and Deferrals](#). It is your responsibility to arrange your deferred final exam by email.

COURSE TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This course requires a modern computer and internet connection to access UM Learn.

- A computer with Windows 8, Windows 10, or Mac OS 10.11+ operating systems
- Web browsers - use Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or Safari. Google Chrome is recommended by IST.
- Test your computer to ensure compatibility with UM Learn (minimum bandwidth of 512 Kbps)
- For assistance with UM Learn contact see [Information and Services Technology](#)
 - 123 Fletcher Argue Phone: 204-474-8600 Email: Servicedesk@umanitoba.ca

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Manitoba [Academic Integrity principles](#).

- You must complete all tests, quizzes, assignments, and the final exam independently.
- Inappropriate collaboration or violation of other academic integrity principles (e.g., academic fraud) may result in serious [disciplinary action](#).
- Visit the [Academic Calendar](#), [Student Advocacy](#), and [Academic Integrity](#) web pages for more information and support.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

I Expect You To...

- **Stay informed**
 - Regularly check the **Course Syllabus**, **UM Learn announcements**, and your **U of M email** for important updates.
- **Follow university policies**
 - Adhere to university policies on [Respectful Work and Learning Environment](#) (RWLE) and [Inappropriate and Disruptive Student Behaviour](#) policies
 - Maintain academic integrity in all coursework and assessments.
 - **Generative AI software is not permitted** for any assignments or assessments.
- **Engage actively in your learning**
 - Read the textbook, watch assigned lecture videos, and make comprehensive notes using the **Learning Objectives (LO) Table** and PowerPoint slides.
 - Complete all assessments (assignments, quizzes, tests, and the final exam) on schedule.
 - Complete all closed-book assessments independently with [academic integrity](#) and abide by university policies on plagiarism, cheating and exam personation.
 - The use of [generative artificial intelligence \(GenAI\)](#) software is **prohibited**.
- **Be prepared for assessments**
 - Have the required technology ready for quizzes/tests/exams (see “Technology Requirements”).
 - If major technical problems occur during a UM Learn quiz, contact the **instructor immediately** (and IST if necessary). Restart your computer and re-enter the quiz before reaching out.
 - Makeup quizzes/tests will only be offered in rare, extreme, and well-documented circumstances.
- **Manage your course materials**

- Keep copies of all coursework until final grades are posted on Aurora.
 - Backup notes and files (U of M students have 1 TB of OneDrive storage through [Office 365](#)).
- **Respect copyright** in all course work.
- **Address grading concerns promptly**
 - You have **seven (7) calendar days** after a grade is posted in UM Learn to raise grading concerns with the instructor. After this period, no changes will be made.

You Can Expect Me To...

- **Foster a positive learning environment**
 - Create an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming online classroom space.
 - Treat you fairly and [respectfully](#) and support your goals for academic success.
- **Follow university standards**
 - Adhere to [ROASS](#) (Responsibilities of Academic Staff with Regard to Students) and all policies on plagiarism, cheating, and exam personation.
- **Support your success**
 - Recommend campus resources such as the [Academic Learning Centre](#), [Student Accessibility Services](#), and [Libraries](#) when appropriate.
- **Protect your privacy**
 - Respect confidentiality and follow all university privacy policies, including [FIPPA](#) (The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act).

USING COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

This course uses copyrighted content. All sources have been appropriately acknowledged, and content has been copied in accordance with copyright laws and University of Manitoba guidelines.

- Copyrighted works, including those created by the instructor, are provided solely for your private study and research.
- You must not distribute these materials in any format, including uploading them to any learning management system (e.g., UM Learn) or other websites.

For more information, consult the [University Copyright Office](#)

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Contact: Lisa Ford, Department of Environment and Geography, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N2, Lisa.ford@umanitoba.ca

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Students registered with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) who have approved extended-time exam accommodations are required to book all exams through the SAS online booking system.

Students who choose not to write with SAS, or who miss their SAS exam appointment, and subsequently require a deferred exam arranged by the instructor will write during the standard 50-minute deferred exam period. In these circumstances, extended time and individual room accommodations will not be available

LEARNER SUPPORTS

Available on UM Learn.